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ABSTRACT

This trainer's guide is intended to assist supervisors of work-based career training projects in helping students learn about what happens during calving season, and also about observing, recording, and presenting information. The guide is one in a series of core curriculum modules that is intended for use in combination on- and off-the-job programs to familiarize youth with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in the workplace. Included in the guide are the following components: project information, a summary of the content and approach of the guide, supervisor's notes, background information, lists of tasks and core skills, an action plan that includes suggested learning activities, supervisor and trainee review sheets, and an assessment form. (KC)

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Youth Training Scheme

CORE EXEMPLAR WORK BASED PROJECT

A study of calvings

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ESF
CORE SKILLS PROJECT
YTS

OTF No: 2

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ASSESSMENT OF CORE SKILLS

This series of projects contains a number of different formats for recording assessment of core skills. These formats are offered for experimental purposes, none is proven as the 'best' method. All are based on the principle that feedback to trainees is a necessary part of the learning process and that such feedback should include information on core skill development.

Further work is being carried out on the methods of assessing achievement of core skills in work-based learning and of how to log such achievement on a record which trainees can take away from YTS. Some of the results of this work will be included in later MSC/ESF Core Skills Project publications.

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INTRODUCTION

WHAT ARE WORK-BASED PROJECTS?

Work-based projects are learning materials which aim to make the most of all the possibilities for developing trainees' skills, knowledge and attitudes in the workplace. They build upon everyday workplace tasks to provide experience of the whole range of YTS learning opportunities.

The projects in this series have been tested with managing agents as part of the YTS Core Project, which is jointly financed by MSC and the European Social Fund. In some cases managing agents will be able to use the projects as they are. In others they will need to be adapted to the circumstances of a particular workplace or to the aims of a particular scheme. Some managing agents will prefer to produce their own projects. For such cases these examples aim to demonstrate some principles of good design in work-based learning materials. These principles are:

To encourage trainees to learn by doing.
To make the most of all the experiences which are available to trainees in the workplaces.
To start from a real task which is seen as relevant by all parties involved — trainees, workplace supervisors, trainers and off-the-job tutors.
To help trainees see the relationships between things learnt on- and off-the-job.
To base the assessment of achievement upon trainees' actual performance in tasks.
To look for all the opportunities for learning which arise from a task and, in particular, to help trainees to develop the core skills. These skills, in number, communication, problem-solving and practical activities, are used in a wide variety of tasks and are essential if trainees are to achieve competence in those tasks*. They are the skills — of finding out information, planning how to do things, overcoming difficulties and so on — which help trainees to learn more quickly in new situations, either in the same workplace, in a different one, or in the world outside work.

Such skills are required naturally by [illegible] workplace tasks in these projects and, in requiring trainees to go beyond the task itself, the projects deliberately *add* to the range of core skills which are required in an everyday working situation. This is especially important for some of the skills of communication and problem-solving which trainees are often not given the opportunity to exercise in work experience.

These principles can be incorporated in projects for all placements and for trainees of all ability levels. Although the projects in this series follow a common format, there is no single 'best' style. Nor is any special expertise in writing necessary. Good work-based projects can be produced by anyone who is determined to help trainees to exploit all of the potential for learning in work experience.

*A technical manual 'Core Skills in YTS' is currently available from MSC. It is supported by a short introductory leaflet and a practitioner's guide for supervisors. A separate manual is available on computer literacy/information technology.

PROJECT INFORMATION

This particular project enables the trainee to find out a great deal about what happens during the calving season. In addition it develops the skills of recording and presenting information and drawing conclusions therefrom. It also involves finding out information from other people and discussing with experts.

In addition, this project will help the trainee to feel part of the team of workpeople on the farm and also help to develop in him/her a sense of responsibility and a feeling that he/she will be able to influence decisions even if only in a minor way.

It was written for a trainee working, as part of a YTS scheme, on a dairy farm in SHROPSHIRE. By working through the project, the trainee was able to extend his knowledge of calving. His careful observing, monitoring and recording of information during this time also enabled him to draw sensible conclusions from the records he kept.

The project could easily be adapted to enable a trainee to monitor the birth of any livestock.

SUMMARY

The trainee is asked to record what happens during the calving season. He/she will note any difficulties concerning individual births, number of live and still births, size and sex of calves, together with all the necessary details.

SUPERVISOR'S NOTES

INTRODUCTION

This work based project is designed to focus the trainee upon the CORE SKILL areas of: number; communication; practical skills, and problem-solving. Wherever possible, it is also designed to provide learning opportunities to improve personal effectiveness; to provide wider knowledge of the world of work and elsewhere; and to furnish the trainee with skills which can be transferred to other situations.

The essence of the work based project is that people learn more quickly and effectively by actually doing something.

The following notes are designed to help you, your staff, and the trainee, so that the project can be carried out with a minimum of disruption to normal work activity.

1. Where relevant, please advise other staff that the trainee will be doing the project;

2. Please ensure that the trainee has read the project details and understands what is required;

3. Please ensure that the trainee is aware of any aspects of safety, hygiene or security which might touch upon the project;

4. Please ensure that the trainee appreciates that good planning will make the task easier. Wherever possible, and before the project starts, the trainee should be encouraged to take responsibility for his/her learning by estimating time, deciding on equipment and materials, identifying possible hazards and other problems, and generally "thinking the project through".

5. Upon completion of the project discuss with the trainee the activities he/she has been engaged in. What problems were there? What has he/she learnt? Would he/she tackle the project differently?

Encourage the trainee to complete the trainee's review page.

Names

TRAINEE .....

SUPERVISOR .....

TUTOR .....

Times

Please fill in the table below. This will show the time you spend on completing this project. The first column has been filled in as an example. Make another table if you need more space.

DATE	16/6			
START	2.30			
FINISH	4.00			
TIME SPENT (HOURS)	1½			

BACKGROUND

It is important for a farmer to know as much as possible about his calves. It is therefore necessary for him to keep a very accurate record of what happens to them when they are born. This project asks the trainee to monitor and record the health of cows and their calves during this time.

SITUATION

On the farm.

PURPOSES

This project will help you to find out a great deal about what happens during the calving season. You will find out about the numbers of live and still births, the size and sex of calves, the nature of veterinary treatment and hopefully at the end of the project, you will be able to present information and ideas to the farmer which will be helpful to him.

Doing this project will enable you to learn more about agriculture. It will also help you to develop your CORE SKILLS (number, communication, problem-solving, and practical skills). Increasing your abilities in these skills will make it easier for you to change jobs and retrain when the need arises.

The tasks you are asked to do are outlined below, together with the most important CORE SKILLS that they contain. When you have finished each task, ask your supervisor to tell you how well she/he thought you did in the task, and record this on the Assessment Form near the back of this Project. This record will be needed to complete your Certificate at the end of your YTS year.

WBP TASK	ACTIVITY	CORE SKILL
1.	Find out information about calving.	Find out information by speaking to other people. 6.1
		Discuss with other people in the workplace how things are to be done. 8.6
2.	Design a chart on which you can record details about the cows and their calves.	Plan how to present information. 9.6
		Discuss with other people in the workplace how things are to be done. 8.6
3.	Monitor and record what happens during calving.	Find out information by observing. 6.3
		Provide information in writing, and by means of tables and diagrams. 7.3
		Decide which category something belongs to. 10.2
		Monitor a process or activity. 11.2

4.	Interpret your findings and discuss the conclusions drawn with other workers.	Interpret numerical data or symbols in written or printed form. 2.1 Provide information in writing, and by means of tables and diagrams. 7.3 Find out information by speaking to other people. 6.1
5.	Present your findings in the form of a report.	Plan how to present information. 9.6 Provide information in writing, and by means of tables and diagrams. 7.3

Each CORE SKILL is identified by number in the PRACTITIONER'S GUIDE to the YTS CORE, which contains advice and guidance on what CORE SKILLS are their uses. The numbers are included here for ease of reference.

ACTION PLAN

TASK 1

Find out as much information as you can about the cows that are due to calve by talking to the farmer and other workers. During these discussions, also find out what happened during calving time last year. What, if any, problems occurred? For instance, how many still births were there? How many cows experienced difficult deliveries? What sort of difficulties were they? What action was taken? There are many other things that you need to know about calving, so take every opportunity to gain information. Make careful notes of the information you gather, as this will help you in the rest of the project.

TASK 2

Using the information you have gathered in task 1, and what you know about calving and the health of calves and cows during this time, design a chart on which you can record details about each cow during and after calving. Plan the layout carefully making sure that you will be able to record information neatly and draw sensible conclusions at the end of your study of calving. Show your chart to the farmer or your supervisor. Discuss the information you are seeking to record and your plans for recording it. Make sure that you haven't left off any important detail that should be looked for and monitored during this time.

Make any necessary amendments to your chart. Now decide where you are going to keep it so that it will be readily available yet protected from dirt.

TASK 3

This is the most important task of all. You must now record on your chart what happens during calving time. Make sure that you do not forget to enter things as they happen. You will need to be observant and ask questions, if at any time you do not understand what is happening or why something is being done. You may find it useful to keep a notebook in your pocket in which you can note things if you are some way away from where you keep the chart.

When you enter information on to your chart, you must be as accurate as possible. Think carefully about the information you have gathered and decide which of the headings on your chart it should go under. Be prepared for the unexpected and make careful notes on this too.

TASK 4

When calving is over and the health of the cows and calves has stabilised, look at all the information you have collected. What can you interpret from your careful monitoring of calving time? Draw as many conclusions as you can. Can you present

some of the information in the form of graphs or diagrams? Show your completed chart to the farmer and discuss the conclusions you have drawn with him/her. Does he/she agree with your conclusions? Note carefully any comments he/she makes. If other people were involved, like the vet, again show them the results of your investigation and note their comments. It would be very exciting if, through your careful observations, you discovered something that had escaped the notice of the farmer.

TASK 5

Now complete the assignment by putting everything you have done into a folder and write a paragraph or two about the conclusions you have come to after your discussions at the end. Present your information carefully and show the final report to the farmer.

TRAINEE REVIEW

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM IN AS MUCH DETAIL AS POSSIBLE AND DISCUSS IT WITH YOUR SUPERVISOR AND TUTOR.

1/ Were you offered a selection of Projects to choose from? If so, why did you choose this one?

2. What did you think of it? Was it - easy, hard, interesting or boring?

3/ What did you learn? (Look at the list of Purposes).

4/ Did you learn something which was not on the list of Purposes?

5/ Did you need help with any particular part of the Project? What kind of help did you get?

6/ Were there any words in the Project that you did not understand? Please list them.

7/ Do you think you could use what you learned in another job, or outside work?

8/ Has this Project helped you decide whether you need further training in certain areas?

SUPERVISOR REVIEW

Please refer to Supervisor's Notes.

Please read the questions included under Trainee Review.

Please complete the Assessment Form and discuss your assessment with the trainee before initialling it to show that you both agree with the assessment.

COMMENTS:

ASSESSMENT

explanatory notes

In completing this wbp the trainee has the opportunity to demonstrate competence in the CORE SKILLS listed on the attached form.

The first two columns list the wbp Tasks and the CORE SKILLS which occur within them.

You are asked to assess the trainee's competence in these CORE SKILLS according to the amount of support from you that the trainee needed, for example:-

1) if a trainee is asked to "find information from written sources" and you provide the trainee with all the sources of that information, together with telling the trainee where to look in any particular source, then that trainee is obviously being given much more support in finding that information than a trainee who identifies the sources and extracts correct information unaided;

2) if a trainee is asked to undertake a task which involves "noticing the needs of customers or clients", and needs considerable prompting to approach a customer, then that trainee is obviously being given more support than a trainee who takes the initiative in approaching the customer.

To be regarded as fully competent in the CORE SKILLS, the trainee should need to be offered no more support than you would normally give to any experienced worker.

Most of the time job competence and CORE SKILLS competence are likely to be the same, but sometimes this may not be so. For instance, a trainee involved in machining a particular component may be competent so far as planning the work is concerned (a CORE SKILL), but may not have reached experienced worker speeds (an occupational skill).

Please tick the appropriate box and initial in the space provided, after you have discussed your assessment with the trainee and agreed any further training required.

ASSESSMENT FORM

PROJECT TITLE A STUDY OF CALVINGS — WBP NO M/02/005 — DATE

TRAINEE'S NAME — SUPERVISOR'S NAME

WBP TASK NO	CORE SKILLS ASSESSED	NEEDED A LOT OF ASSISTANCE	NEEDED SOME ASSISTANCE	LITTLE OR NO ASSISTANCE		COMMENTS INCLUDING NO OPPORTUNITY	AGREED INITIALS	
				NEEDS MORE PRACTICE	COMPETENT		TRAINEE	SUPERVISOR
1 & 4	6.1 Find out information by speaking to other people.							
1 & 2	8.6 Discuss with other people in the workplace how things are to be done.							
2 & 5	9.1 Plan how to present information.							
3	6.3 Find out information by observing.							
3, 4 & 5	7.3 Provide information in writing, and by means of tables and diagrams							
3	10.2 Decide which category something belongs to.							
3	11.1 Monitor a process or activity.							
4	2.1 Interpret numerical data or symbols in written or printed form.							